June 9, 2006
Bob Weeden and Ginny Wood

The interviewers are not identified at any time on the tape. There are at least two interviewers (possibly three) – one (or two) male and one female. Their comments are not identified with prefacing initials. I have not included most of the many vague 'affirmative/I'm listening' sounds made by the listeners when one or the other of the principle speakers is talking. Neither have I left off the 'g' endings on words like 'hunting' 'fishing' 'sitting' even when that hard 'g' sound was not articulated by the speaker. At places where more than one voice is speaking, I have generally gone with the one most clearly heard on the tape. If a word or numbers (tape counter notation) appears in "( )" with a "?" or in blue – I'm not sure I heard it right. Words or partial words appearing in [ ] are ones that ***I*** put in to clarify the thought. Proper names that I could not verify the spelling of show up in red text.

GW – Ginny Wood
BW – Robert "Bob" Weeden
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… Wood and Dr. Bob Weeden

Ginny.

And we are here … what is it … June …

9th.

… 9th 2006. And this will primarily be a dialog between Ginny and Bob … about … primarily about the early years of the conservation movement in Alaska and …

GW -- You want the revised … one … version?

No. No. No, revisions to history here.

Well, Ginny, we've interviewed you several times about your background and your role in ACS and so what I would like to do is ask Bob to talk about his perception of how and why it was formed, and his early involvement in it. And from there we'll maybe discuss some of the issues that you two worked on together … right here in this house. Bob …

BW -- The Alaska Conservation Society was the first state wide conservation organization in Alaska that could claim to be both state wide and contemporary … modern, in its view of what conservation meant. And it was also the first time in my life when I was truly an adult. Because I was just out of school -- had been in school for 21 out of 26 years -- and finally was ready to join real life, and somehow also ready to join some kind of activist organization of, you know, dealing with nature.

Why? Can I ask you, why did you? Most (-) aren't worried about activism. They just want the job. What made you different?

BW -- Oh, I don't know. I honestly don't know. What makes anybody the way they are? I guess I've always wanted to be involved in community, whether it's big or little, community affairs. And as a graduate student you're kind of focused on your own self. It's a very selfish time of life. And you're trying to get the skills to cope. And finally, when I got to be a big boy, and Judy married me, and we came up north to have a family, it seemed like it was time to act like an adult. And part of that is being an active citizen. I mean, I guess, that's just was in me. I don't know why. It just was going to be expressed somehow.

Uh hum.

BW -- But, I was going to say that ACS started in 19--, late '59 / early 1960, and had a twenty year run. And, I think, among other things, it proved that … for the first time, that there was, and is, a constituency to speak out for conservation, for wild things, for nature -- in Alaska. Sometimes it doesn't seem like it. Newspapers don't show it much. But it's there. And … another thing it showed was that a conservation organization, once it gets started, will collect friends really rapidly if it … if it has a good character, and a fairly strong character. The ACS character was really formed by the Fairbanks group, which was the first of 10 … or 11 … chapters, eventually?

GW -- Oh, 11 chapters.

BW -- Yeah. And we were formed by a group of scientists, and a group of passionate citizens who understood why the scientists were saying what they were saying. And it all became a collective of people where the common denominator was the love of outdoors -- however you expressed it. Whether you loved skiing or abhorred it, or whatever, it didn't matter. It was there in some form. And that, plus a respect for science, or a knowledge of what it could do, set the character of ACS so that we were forever - domed you might say - to want to get some facts about what was going on. Which isn't always necessary, or obviously done, in conservation work. Sometimes you just take a line and you pursue it, knowing you're going to compromise in some direction anyway. But you begin by being outrageous, not worrying where the chips fall. And then fall back to something that you've hoped to get all along. But our style was to kind of build up slowly, be a little bit deliberate, a little bit 'mmm … yeah … well … no.' You know, kind of -- this is on the one hand, and here's on another hand. And everybody's got at least two hands. So it was slow and cumbersome. And I think we paid for it, in some ways, during the D2 affair, when the power and the action was in Washington, DC, and we weren't quite taking the … the line that the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society and the Alaska Coalition were taking. But, I think in terms of a homegrown organization, whose focus was not as the Sierra Clubs was or Wilderness Society, was not nationwide preservation issues, but living in Alaska with nature; it seems like we really fit the bill. Well, then … life matured around us. Nature is changing all the time. And society is changing. And it's hard to keep track. But, ACS finally came to the end of its road as a collective, umbrella organization exactly 20 years after it formed. Now, many of the chapters that were formed still go on, because we insisted that they be incorporated themselves -- have their own officers, raise their own money. Which was a stroke of brilliance -- which we didn't know about, but it was. Because when the umbrella dissolved, the shaft was still there. And people put their own, you know, sunshade on it. And so we had chapters. Gosh, Ginny, correct me, but Fairbanks and Anchorage, Kenai / Soldotna, Homer, Kodiak, Haines / Skagway, Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, and Ketchikan. So there were at least those 10.

Uh hum.

GW -- Yeah.

BW -- So, it was … it was a very wide spread organization. And, as I say, in many of those places … the folks were similar. A little knot of conservationists would collect around one

kind of renegade, unafraid, agency person; whether it was a Will Troyer or a Dave Spencer or … or a whoever it was, wherever it was. Somebody was willing to kind of get involved, and people would collect around her or him and … away you'd go. Dixie Body in Ketchikan, obviously.

GW -- Yeah.

Uh hum.

BW -- Anyway, so that's kind of what ACS's run in Alaskan history. We lost out finally, you might say, if it was a competition at all. We lost out because we decided at the very start that there was a joy and a benefit in being a volunteer organization.

Uh hum.

BW -- And except for struggling to pay a half time executive secretary - Tina Stoneroff - and a couple of others, we remained a volunteer organization. And frankly, when we pitted, say our public outpourings with those or … of the Alaskan … Northern Alaska Environmental Center, which we helped to start, and the Alaska Center for the Environment in Anchorage, and Southeast Alaska Conservation Council … all of those had core staff. Sometimes one person, sometimes 1 ½ / 2 people, as they were able to build. And, eventually, the Alaska Conservation Foundation and the Alaska Environmental Assembly began taking over the coordinative function that ACS and its yearly meetings had always had. But then there was money available to get conferences together, anywhere, usually Anchorage and sometimes Juneau. And … so, some of our key functions were taken over by the … the really hard core power of staffing. Now, in some ways, the staff always is in danger of taking over from the volunteers. They are the ones that spend all day, every day, thinking about something. They are the ones that have the arguments in hand. Pretty soon everybody's tugged along, like the cars on a freight train, and 'X' staff member is the engine. And that's … like any benevolent dictatorship, that's great when it works. It's not so great if it doesn't work. Because then you don't have the backup – volunteers. But, anyway, ACS took one road, and came to the end of that road, for various reasons.

GW -- Well, I think … one of the reasons was that we operated out of living rooms, with a Camp Denali hand cranked …

BW -- Mimeograph …

GW -- Mimeograph machine.

[??] -- just stetner

GW – And … we didn't even have telephones where we lived; if you lived out of town, which almost everybody did. We'd meet at the University once a week. And nobody stopped us; now they would. But … least of all the professors that let us use their classroom. But, I think it was … we realized that we still had money … more money than when we started. Was … was it a dollar … a dollar a year for dues when we started?

BW -- Not much.

GW -- And … and we still … so, we had a lot more money than when we started. But we found out that you can't be effective in this day and age, or even 20 years ago, without having something more than a hand cranked mimeograph machine … and … telephones, and … a staff … a telephone … that someone [can] get in touch with your organization. Well, we didn't even have telephones at home in those days. So, I think it was the times change[ing] and we decided we should quit while we were ahead. It wasn't because we weren't effective. It wasn't because we didn't have money in the treasury. Wouldn't be much by now'a days, but it was enough to get, you know, buy postage … and … a staff and somebody to answer the phone.

BW -- And our constitution required that if there was a dissolution that we would give the money to like conservation organizations. So that was our last official act, just before we

closed down, was to distribute our assets -- the archives to the University and the dollar assets to all the … all of the then existing ACS chapters.

Yeah

GW -- And we didn't start out to make chapters. They got in touch with us. 'Say, how do you … how do you [be]come a member?' And we said, 'what's your issue? What's you … what's your community fussed up about? Well, you start there. Don't try to go in and start something that they aren't ready for.' And some of them have active Sierra Clubs and Wilderness Society things and … and lots of our members had … belonged. But it started at a home grown thing, and on home grown issues, and we just felt that's how others should start. And … then … you … imagine, if you don't even have a … number in a telephone book.

BW -- Right. You know, we even … you remember this -- we even helped to start Yukon's first conservation group.

GW -- Oh, that's right.

BW -- John … John Lammers …

GW -- Yes. I'd forgotten him.

BW -- … contacted us because he and his wife had homesteaded out at Peli Crossing …

Humm.

BW -- … north of Whitehorse. And it was pretty wild at that point. But then one day bulldozers began coming down the riverbank and showing up in his front yard. And they had a mineral lease, where he was homesteading. And of course the under … the surface rights were one thing, and the underground rights were another. And he was just absolutely outraged. And so he tried to fight that, and moved to Whitehorse because he didn't like Peli

Crossing anymore. And in Whitehorse he was trying to figure out how to get something going, and learned about ACS in Fairbanks. So, I guess it was … oh, 7 or 8 years after we started that the Yukon Conservation Society got going and John was its first president.

GW -- And remember Petersburg?

BW – Yeah!

GW -- And we had a … a guy that became very active. But what … but you couldn't have gone in there and gotten Peters… they fish.

What was the issue in Petersburg?

GW -- Well, Petersburg Creek …

BW -- Petersburg Creek …

GW -- They were going … going to log it. And that's where … that's their playground. And it takes an issue, 'cause we weren't out to proselytize or get other chapters started. We just were taking care of what was here. But Fairbanks, at that time, was the second largest city and we started … Fairbanks started out to be much bigger than Anchorage, long before Anchorage was even thought of. Anyway … it's … we didn't ever try to start a chapter; they contacted us. We said 'what's your issue? What's the … what's the bonfire in your backyard? Well, get together … and …"

BW -- You know, down there again, the people who started it … one person was actually not living in Petersburg, but that's Skip Wallen. He … he has a …

GW -- And also Jack …

BW -- … a godfather who … who adopted him and lives in … was it … Gochis was his native name, from Petersburg. But … Skip was very, very incensed over the Forest Service's proposal to log Petersburg Creek. And then Emily and Harry Merriam both got …

GW -- And Jack …

BW -- Not Calvin …

GW -- Calvin. Yeah.

BW -- Well, in Sitka that was …

GW -- He was in Sitka.

BW -- He was in Sitka. Yeah. But Petersburg … and you may know Roger because you've seen all these reviews, or bulletins, of ours. There was a special Petersburg Creek issue with Skip Wallen's beautiful photographs. And that really came out also as a … an album, a photo album, that was available commercially for a while. It was just lovely. I may have a copy myself. But, yeah. That's what got the Petersburg chapter started. But all of the chapters had a similar story.

GW -- Yeah. It wasn't one we …

BW -- It was logging in Haines, for example. And …

Let me ask you, you know, I joined both groups -- the Fairbanks Environmental Center and ACS in '74, when Ginny and Celia signed me up after orienting me at Camp Denali.

BW -- Now was Jimmy Kolowski still there at the Fairbanks …

He had just … actually just left.

BW – Humm.

I think it was Virg Matts …

BW – Oh, yes.

… was temporary or acting …

GW -- Well, they hired him and … and we kind of were tangential … supporters of it. in fact, we divided up the … we'd just gotten … somebody sent us a … sum of money for being … an award, for being the best … what was it that we got the 2500 dollars for … from some…? Reward for being the best small environmental organization or what … what … We still had money in our treasury, so we just divided it up between the others.

Well, you know, it was impression, being a member of both, being very young, that ACS was very professional, very academic, and very cautious, in the stands it took; where the Environmental Center was more appealing to some of us younger folks because it was less patient.

BW -- Yep. Yep.

Is that your impression?

BW -- Oh, I think that was true. But especially in Fairbanks. And to some degree in a few other places. But when you come to … Sitka, for example, it was not a very patient group there.

GW -- No.

BW -- They wanted to go gung ho. As far as we were concerned that's great. I mean, we weren't selling patience, we were selling results.

GW -- The last chapter that organized was Anchorage.

BW -- Yeah.

Is that right?

GW -- Yeah. It was started more in Fairbanks and some of the small … small communities. And it always started with the 'what's the fire in your backyard, and what are people worked up about?' And that's … if they don't have that, you'll … you have … everybody has too many organizations they have to belong to anyway. That was never … we didn't ever proselytize, but sometimes we'd send (-138-) down if we … well, I remember, what was it … they were going to start one in … it wasn't Homer … on the way to Homer …

BW -- … Kenai?

GW -- Yeah. And …

BW – Kingfisher?

GW --Yeah. And … that was when Gordon Wright, who was the conductor … we says, 'is anybody going to go down?' And he said, 'well, I will.' And we said, 'how much money you need?' And he said, 'well, 15 dollars for … for hamburgers, and I'll ride my bicycle.'

Is that right?

Well, tell me, in Fairbanks here, what were the galvanizing issues that brought you folks together?

GW -- First it was the … establish … that's where we all kind of met and decided, when we were asked to testify by a professor at the University before … right at statehood, just a year after statehood. And it was over the establish[ment] of the Artic Refuge.

Uh hum.

GW -- It wasn't the 10 02 area then.

Yeah.

GW -- That was not the issue. It's whether we should … and that was … that's when we all got together.

BW -- And our very first three major issues were not local Fairbanks issues at all. They were …

GW -- Polar bears.

BW -- … kind of half of the state issues. They were the northern half of the state, because it was AEC out at Point Hope, and Project Chariot, and it was Rampart Dam, and it was …

GW -- Polar bears.

BW -- … Artic National Wildlife Range, and polar bears. So, yeah, we … we didn't really start as a local … let's say, 'don't pollute the Chena River,' or 'quit mining on the finger creeks' …

GW -- No. No.

BW -- … or something like that. We … we started with issues that were distant, but big, and seemed important to us.

Yeah. So for the Artic Refuge … you hadn't been there Bob …

BW -- I never … no, I hadn't even been there.

You probably perceived yourself benefiting from it. What motivated you to get involved in protecting this remote place?

BW -- Hey, I was at a point where I was just so enthralled with Alaska, of the idea of Alaska rather than knowledge of it. But my idea of Alaska was: it's a wild country. And just coming to this place and realizing that there were people who didn't want it to stay wild – I … that really affronted me. So I began defending whatever seemed to need defending. And I was happy to have other people take the lead and tell me what was needed. You know, whether it was Les Merrick and Don Foote and company over in Point Hope, or whether it was the Muries, and I had met both Olaus and Adolph, and … Mardy, and, of course, we knew Briana Kessel and George Schalla … Schaller. And so, just knowing those people, it was ok to say, 'yeah, me too.'

So let me ask you Bob: you're a new employee with the State Fish and Game, newly established state, that is adamantly against a federal reserve in northeast Alaska, that's strongly against the Artic Refuge; what problems did that cause for your career -- both psychologically for you to deal with it, and politically?

BW -- Well, that particular issue didn't cause me any real anguish as a young biologist within Fish and Game. Didn't bother me if the governor was being silly, and, you know, opposing any such thing, any such action by Fred Seaton. It was ok, as long as Fish and Game was saying what it was saying. Which was that it … it obviously couldn't say it was ok to have the Artic Wildlife Range, but they were just very, very quietly voicing concerns about what would happen if it <u>were</u> developed for mineral, or oil and gas. And then also asking questions about access, because they were concerned about maintaining access for hunting - especially hunting - some fishing. But, Fish and Game didn't seem to worry about what I did in ACS at that time. That came 9 years later, and came down kinda hard, 'cause things had gotten more politicized by then. But … we were … I was ok with that. And I felt that … I guess, some how I had the wrong headed opinion that if I was interested

in saving wildlife habitat, that was a good thing to do for Fish and Game, even if it meant maybe a few hunters not having all the access they wanted. But …

GW -- Well, then we didn't have to worry too much about access, unless you had an airplane, and there weren't enough people who owned airplanes, and … and actually one of …

BW -- And the balloon-tired Super Cub was barely getting started, you know, in those days.

GW – Well, I think that the hunting … hunting and fishing people … users … thought well, that … well, I know one person that turned out to be very much against … the … saving the Artic, but he started out being with us. Because, he said, we want to go hunting where there aren't going to be a half dozen other (-185-) shooting out with rifles … where we are. And … but, see … the world system hadn't even hardly been started then. So the idea that you kept something wild … and there wasn't any village except one Eskimo, which they weren't opposed to it, and … there … just the idea of the frontier, and of course a funny part of the thing, a frontier is something where your pushing civilization further and further. It's not the … the … you know, the cowboys or the Indians. It's the … it's something … it's civilization … always wanting to push the frontier. But the idea of having a … space where there weren't any … everybody probably, then'd come up when someplace was getting too crowded, or noisy, or too many other hunters where they wanted to go. So the idea that there would be a place that was hard to get to, and that the … you just … that just breed animals, and it wasn't anybody to object. There was no minerals; no mining; no city; one Eskimo village -- and they lived off the sea. That's all the habitation there was. So you weren't …

No oil companies?

GW -- No oil companies. They hadn't discovered oil.

Uh hum.

Well that's interesting. Ginny, you mentioned the frontier, and both you people have written extensively on the idea of the frontier and whether this venerated self image Alaskans have is really appropriate up here. Bob, what do you think about that?

BW -- I started off running to be in the frontier. I mean, here I am, a suburban kid in Massachusetts, growing up with probably an overdose of Zane Grey, and I really wanted to come west. I mean, that's where my heart was. And I wanted to be, I thought, in the frontier, because I kinda pictured myself at the edge of this frontier - so called - looking ahead, to the place where people hadn't been yet. But what I discovered when I got up here, is that there's a whole lot of stuff going ahead, where that wave is hitting the sand, and a lot of things are churning up, and they're not altogether pretty. The frontier, as I understand it now, wherever it exists -- it still in Australia, or in Siberia, or in the Canadian north, or in Alaska -- it exits primarily as a facade -- to cover greed.

GW -- That's a good …

Uh hum.

BW -- It's touted as, you know, come visit the frontier. As the image for the tourist to get. But the people who live here fight like heck to change it into something that's not a frontier.

Yeah.

BW -- I mean, they want all the banks; they want all the Fred Meyers; they want all Home Depots; they want all this stuff. They want access everywhere; airplanes everywhere; snowmobiles everywhere. They don't want the frontier. What they want is the opportunity to make it. And I found that to be very discouraging. And it still is. But, you know, it's part of the … a person who is daring, and adventurous, and has courage, and who wants to be in a place where you can take risks with little capitol, not have to be a banker taking risks with 5 billion dollars in your pocket, you … you go out and do it on your own. That's the kind of person that will come to a place that's called a 'frontier.' And when they get there,

the main thing is to make a stake, to take the chance to make it. And if you get frustrated, meanwhile, then you get angry. And people who are opposing you in … let's … when you say 'hey, all I've got to do is get another road out here. I know we'll find the next big copper mine. I mean, it's just sitting there, waiting for us.' Kennecott, over … out in the (?probuck?), has been waiting for us for 50 years now. And all it needs is a road. And then comes along Bob Weeden who says 'I don't think roads are a good idea. What'll that do to the hunting and fishing in … you know, the native Alaskan says 'I don't think we want a road out there. It's ok where there is one now, but don't make a new one.' So, anyway, I feel the frontier is something that attracts the youth in people, and something that makes a good story. But it never was pretty. It wasn't pretty in South Africa when the English and the Germans made a frontier out of it. Wasn't pretty in Australia, shooting aborigines like they were wolves or something. It wasn't pretty in Alaska. Wasn't pretty in Colorado. It just … it's one of these myths that people have in their heads that just outruns reality.

How about you Ginny? you're … the main statement you made in your Artic Refuge testimony to the senate hearing was that's … it's no longer a good image for Americans.

GW -- Did I say that? I …

Yeah.

GW -- … remember thinking that. Well, I think, I agree with Bob. there's another … too … all the ner'do'wells who couldn't make it, or have a prison record, think of a frontier [as] where you go and maybe make a new start, but you can … just … do what you were doing when you got arrested … up there, 'cause they can't find you. you know, that … that's … we get the worst and the best, I think, the adventurous … the person that … the idea that you can come up and … and not have a bunch of rules, regulations, and … you want the open space, you want the solitude, you want the wild animals, and everything. And then you also have "wow, bettcha it's a good place to make a buck and not too honestly." And they come too.

BW -- Well, Ginny, you know, in her own life, has epitomized this whole thing. She came for those very honest and real and urgent reasons that we just spoke about. And she didn't happen to like to become greedy and get stuff. But a lot of people who came for fairly similar reasons just didn't have that … and at the watershed they took a different course.

Yeah.

GW – Well, I think that's kind of a universal thing now – money.

Uh hum.

GW -- No matter … how much you really … I mean, poverty's one thing. To really be, you know, down and out; that's the worst. But the other is … always want more and … kinda do anything to get it. And, you known, you can only spend so much money, and then … but, I think, for us that came up here -- maybe just to look it over, we didn't … you hardly ever find anybody that said 'all my life I wanted to go to Alaska and stay there.' You ask them why they came and you'll get a different answer. But, very few intended … well, when I came up here almost everybody I met did plan to stay. There was an awful lot of people that came up on the GI Bill from WWII. Went to the University, and maybe got a job, and maybe went home, but didn't … didn't … they never intended to stay.

BW -- You know, I was one of those who … who hoped to be able to stay, and wanted to stay. Again, for very romantic, and maybe silly reasons, but they became pretty solid and compelling as, you know, the more I lived here. Um … but, once in the early 1970's a company did a survey, it may have been a University group that did a survey, of people in Fairbanks, as to how long they had been here and how long they planned to stay. And … half of the people in Fairbanks had been here 10 years of less. And half of those were intending to leave within 5 years. And, so, here's an … an underlay of … of rooted unrootedness, restlessness that's in the population. Now, that was pipeline days. Um … but imagine trying to build a community on that. Who's going to vote for a school bond issue when they're going to leave in 4 years or they just … it's … it's just more taxes while were here, right? And … so, it's … it's tough to build a community when it's so restless.

And I've never felt … I never felt that someplace was always better than some other place, you know, on a two year basis, or a 5 year, or 10 year basis. I thought I would be here forever. Well, we … I wasn't here forever, quite. Ginny comes closer to it. But … you … at least in my heart I have felt that I have brought to every place that I've come a feeling that I'd like to make it home. And that's the essential thing.

Uh hum.

BW -- And that's where a difference between a person who feels they want to make it home -- may have to leave. But, the person who comes not being interested in making it a home is surely going to leave. Not only that, gonna … they're … leave … leave turmoil behind.

Uh hum.

GW -- Well, I think you don't come in planning to stay the rest of your life … hardly anybody … but, then you find out why did they stay. And lots of them went. And wherever they went … 'gosh, I like it better in Fairbanks.' And I don't know what they say in Anchorage. It's probably different. But … Fairbanks has a … it's where you knew … unique community. And … no matter where they came, if it was like Mardy Murie … she writes in her book … when she came … and she was 9 years old, and what … and … because her father had a job here. And … there early days of Fair… when I arrived I was delivering an airplane, the only reason I didn't leave is because the weather was bad, and it went to 50 below, and by the time it warmed up I had a chance to fly some cargo over to Kotzebue, and got weathered in over there where … there were … there was an Eskimo village, and I was charmed by them, this commun… the people could live in that cold weather, and had lived here for hundreds of years, and seemed to have thrived. And … it just was intriguing. And I think you … you still think, 'well, I'll … I'll stay another year, or two year, or three year.' And then you go outside and when you look around and decide 'gosh, I like it better in Alaska' it kind of dawns on you …

BW – Sounds almost like … sounds almost like you just haven't found the clear stretch of weather ahead so you can leave.

GW -- No. I've left. I've gone outside. Got married and thought my husband would … would be … would want to live outside with his … close to where his training was. And … I met him up here. He … he was one of those GI's who came up after WWII, and … on the GI Bill, and that …

BW -- He went to U of A?

GW -- Yeah. With the Uni… there was a lot of people up here then. And they were an older … they weren't like the freshmen I went to college with. They were people who had been through the War. Some of them'd left at 18 and got drafted and went through four years of hell and just wanted to get away from it all. Didn't want to go home. Didn't want to live where they'd grown up. They … they were escaping, really, from a War. And came up here. And everything's kinda new and just developing. And that was the … But, most of them always said, 'well, I wouldn't want spend the rest of my life in Fairbanks, Alaska.' And they're still here.

Just to continue on this, before you ask another question Roger, [I'm] interested in whether that's the same in other places, that people in our society go places for two years, or five years; is that unique to Fairbanks?

BW -- Oh, no. There's whole segments of North Americans who intend to move. They may come from a family that, for various reasons, either in government or business, they've been posted one place after another as they rose through the ranks. Um … so they're used to it. Or they themselves strike out on that kind of life, because their focus is professional, or their focus is earning power, or whatever it may be. So this is one of the things that I feel is seriously wrong with all of North American society, and Canada included, is that we are rapidly losing a sort of a majority that intends to make a home out of a place, which is a

long term commitment. And, you know, you can view long term in any way you want. I'm not talking about the need to bury your head every … you know, 24/7 for 80 years, and then raise kids and keep them chained so they have to stay. I don't mean that. But, I just mean, making that full commitment to a place, which includes the community and the land around it. That's not common. That's not common.

GW -- Well, they're losing the agricultural …

BW -- Was going to say, if … if you're born in rural places, many places, you have to get out, you know, because there isn't a spot for you there. And then once you get into a city, it may be 50 years before you get back to a rural place. And then you're one of the retired old farts that comes and builds a big house and moves back home, but isn't really part of the community then either.

GW -- Right.

BW -- Yeah. No, Judy and I have noticed it that where we are in Salt Spring Island, that there is … well, there is a percentage, whatever it might be - 20% or something, of the … what you call old families, where … mainly agricultural and logging families, and some of the people who ran the businesses to serve and provide all the groceries and everything, so … and that both the merchants and the rural people have this long term view -- several generations view. But on top of that 20% there's at lease 20%, at the very top, who have come within the last 5 years, maybe 10 years, and built a big retirement home, and it's one of four they have. You know, Barbara Streisand is an example. And they're hardly ever there. They built a 10,000 square foot home; they're they are allegedly part of the community, but they just visit it, and wouldn't dream of getting into the PTA or raising a kid there, or, you know, anything like that. So it's a very a … it's a … it's a lovely community to live in, it's a … very green … and lots of people committed to community, but it's still restless, and it's still built on a very restless foundation. It happens to be a place, now, where it's popular to retire to. So it has the, I guess, the stability of the retired couple who might stay there until they die, or might not, but they kind of intend to.

Would you guys say that this sense of the frontier, this frontier image and identity, was … underlies a lot of the projects that ACS was initially opposed to like Rampart, Chariot, Artic Refuge?

BW -- Well, …

GW -- I don't …

BW -- I'll take a crack at that. I … I think that a lot of them were this Eldora do sort of thing, where people who come to a frontier, come for a gold strike, in some form or another. The real gold wasn't really out there. I think the gold error in Alaska – error – probably lost money. I mean, at least up … between 1890 something and … and 1980, probably was a losing proposition -- if you counted the hours spent by people, and the money spent, and then compared it with the value of the gold taken out -- it was a loser.

GW -- Well first it was fish, and then it was gold.

Yeah.

GW -- And then it was oil.

Yeah.

BW – And … and I think that, because of the fact that the country disappointed the newcomers so often; it was not full of saleable timber; it was not teaming with saleable fish; it was not as rich as people thought it was. The minerals might have been there, but nobody could find them, or once they found them they were too far away to recover. You know, just everything was a disappointment. So you think of the late '50s -- brand new state, struggling to make itself financially viable by getting tax revenues, and people not having much to pay taxes on. The military expenditures were a godsend. And they were just ripe for someone to come along and say 'here's a big project, it'll employee hundreds of people, and there'll be lots of cement poured.' So 'let's pour this cement across the Yukon River.' Well, this was a federal idea, promoted by the state people because it sounded really good.

But it was simply Ernest Gruening, taking an idea out of the Bureau of Reclamation, and saying 'yup, that's good pork barrel, that'll get me elected for a few years. If I'm in favor of this, I can do whatever I want.' And, in fact, he was a very strong 'dove' in the Vietnam War period. He was for family planning in a time when that was very unpopular. He was allowed to do that by the … the voters here because he was in favor of Rampart Dam. Well, we had to fight it. It wasn't right. It was stupid

Let's talk about Rampart Dam. That was after the Artic Refuge, the next big …

BW -- Yup.

… issue you guys took on. And it must have been very discouraging, because President Kennedy, as popular as he was, supported Rampart Dam. The whole political structure in Alaska did … the business community … I mean, you must have been really underdogs in this. What motivated … what impelled you to take on this huge challenge?

BW -- We enjoyed being underdogs.

GW -- We were underdogs to start with.

BW -- Get used to it after a while.

GW -- Yeah. Well, you have to remember that, we had a little bit of ego. That we didn't do it to be famous, either Bob or I or Celia Hunter or anybody else that got … It just was … well, we didn't like the people, or the way they were doing it. First place - Yukon … that would have dammed up a lot of the native villages. Even, would you believe it, our perpetual …

BW -- Dan Young's …

GW -- … Senator Daniel Young had a log cabin. He was a school teacher up in Yukon. …

BW -- Fort Yukon.

GW -- … Fort Yukon and he was on our side. He didn't want that dam. And a lot of the natives would have … you know … people lived along the river 'cause that was the … fish was so … their subsistence, and also their transportation. If you were hunting, you went by boat. And put the … Anyway, it was kind of fun to be involved in some of these things. I reflect now, all the people … Chamber of Commerce … and all the people that came up to get rich … and the people who just say 'oh there's money in it for me' … and growth, we were perpet… we just want growth … if you just stop to analyze it, growth is what's getting in … you know, too many roads … faster cars … go faster … more roads. And everyone of them brings more … there's a few gro… roads, probably like the one between here and Anchorage was … destined to be … and should be … and there went right … parallels the railroad … but then all these others, all they do is go broke trying to maintain them, especially in permafrost and the winters we have. But … anyway … I think the idea of something big, and … well, going back to what I was really thinking about, and musing as Bob was talking, is what if we had put the dam in … if they … if they had … if we hadn't bucked it and they had a dam across the Yukon River that would … back up a lake 200 miles long, what would they have done when they found they had oil up there and want to get a pipeline down? What would you get … They'd have to ferry … the oil across.

BW -- You know, I … I happened to be leader of the statewide waterfowl research at that time. So, my first inclination was to think of the ducks. And, of course, the Fort Yukon Flats had been a famous waterfowl breeding area that was well recognized in the '40s and '50s as being, sort of, nationwide, first class, and … and in spite of the proclamations of a very good biologist, who was also a banker downtown, in Fairbanks, who said 'ducks don't drown'… Well, that was … he was a judge wasn't he? Warren …

GW -- Oh, yes. Right. Warren Taylor.

BW -- Warren Taylor. He wrote in the Fairbanks News Minor that 'what are they talking about? Ducks don't drown.' And I said, 'no, they don't. But they don't nest too good in 100 fathoms of water.' So, anyway, my first thought was that particular biological thing. And then as I talked with more and more people, the fisheries people knew, from Columbia River examples, that they weren't going to get the salmon run to stay up above the Yukon brid … the Yukon Dam. It was not gonna happen. It was this 200 mile long still lake that the young salmon would have to navigate, to come down stream, and they just weren't gonna do it. And there was nothing in the project that said they were gonna build massive fishways, and turbine protectors, and whatnot, to try to make it work. So, it was pretty clear that you were gonna substitute a … cold lake full of …

GW -- Water?

BW -- … carbon and phosphorus - from all of the decaying vegetation - that was going to be really a dead lake for decades and decades to come. And it was going to be ice from probably early in November, because it would be a long time before it froze, but June / July, I mean, you can drive back even … past even Colony Lake now, and in late June the ice is just kinda going out, right? And … so, the fisheries people hated it. And then all of the folks that realized the trapping and hunting that went on there by … even if you airlifted the people out and put them on the edge of the lake somewhere, they wouldn't have anything, 'cause the lake covered all the good ground, and lapped up against the shores of these barren hills. The moose wouldn't be there. The caribou wouldn't be moving through. So, it was going to be a biological disaster. And then any common sense would tell you that it was just laughable on economic grounds.

GW -- I remember, Celia Hunter … a … was debated … you know, we didn't work for the government, one of the few people didn't work for the government or the University -- which was government, too, to some extent. So when they wanted a speaker they'd come to Celia [and/or] me, because we didn't … they couldn't take our jobs; we didn't have any. But, anyway, she was debating … he was a local … a … a senator down in Juneau … was debating why we should have the Rampart Dam and all it would mean to our economy. And so (?Sid?)

got up and she talked about the same thing he's talking about … is the economics of if. How much it would cost. Who would get … what would you do? I mean, you're just putting this big barrier, right … 200 mile lake … an artificial lake. And … so, he … here … her opponent said, 'you're supposed to talk about ducks and your talking about economics.'

Hum.

BW -- Yeah. But that's what they never could … they never could figure out what they were going to do with the electricity. Because it was many, many times total state consumption at that time. And they had ideas of putting it into a distribution web that would eventually get it down into the Seattle area. Which it could, but the line losses would have been absolutely terrific. And so it just … just flat out didn't make any sense.

GW -- Economics. Lot of times we turned to economics rather than …

BW -- Yeah.

GW -- … ecology …

BW -- Uh hum.

GW -- … because that's what everybody's interested in, and proved that this is economically not … not feasible. there was one … were you … you were up here then, when the … the outfit that was going to come up and … Project … what did they call it, where they were going to take the four major rivers and turn them around and send them down to the … the … the desiccated … southwest. And they really, actually, did. I mean, they … the … they were up here pushing it.

BW -- … wanted it.

GW -- And it was … everybody was … the minute you get something like that you have all these people – money; people; growth; yes, let's do it. And …

BW -- It was called the North American Water And Power Alliance -- NAWAPA

GW -- Yeah. NAWAPA. That was what I was trying to think of.

BW -- The engineering country was … company was the Ralph M. Parsons Engineering. And they were backed, among other people, by the Wenatchee Herald newspaper.

GW -- Oh, yeah. I used to live in Wenatchee.

BW -- And they really got this thing going. And for a while it was quite an amazing project …

GW – Everybody was buying into it.

BW -- … I mean. And from an engineering standpoint, it was just exciting, because it would take all of the Yukon water back down into the Frazier Valley Trench, the Rocky Mountain Trench, and then from there they would distribute it east to the Great Lakes in order to deepen the water in the Great Lakes …

GW -- Oh I hadn't heard that one.

BW -- Yeah. So that the Saint Laurence Seaway would have more water and they could have deeper draft vessels. Then they would send it down to California and … and … water the desert. It was … amazing idea. They didn't talk about the cost too much. I remember a fellow in Canada at the time, named Frank Quinn, who wrote an article called "The North Also Thirsts" and … which tells the story right there, you know. Don't think about our water folks. You … it … it's ours; we're going to need it. We're going to keep it.

GW -- Remember under … when Hickle was governor, and he was almost buying into a … t … to … capture the icebergs and send them down for drinking water to the place … people were running out of water.

What time period was NAWAPA?

BW -- Uh … late 1950s right through much of the '60s, it was just ..

GW -- Kept cropping up.

BW -- … kept coming around. Yeah. I think I remember the first … report or headline …

GW -- Before we had …

BW -- … it was about 1958.

GW -- … oil.

BW -- You know …

GW --Then when … now everything's oil.

BW -- Uh hum. Well, it'll be water again.

GW --Yeah.

BW – Yeah. They'll use oil to pump the water, is what will happen. 'Cause it's …yeah it's a big one.

Well, Bob, how did your job at Fish and Game … you worked for Fish and Game during Rampart era didn't you?

BW -- Yes.

How did your work there relate to ACS? Were … did you do any leaking or were you able to be forthright in bringing the Fish and Game information to ACS?

GW -- You just …

BW -- I don't …

GW -- We just changed … we just elected somebody else president for that time.

BW -- Um … you know, at that point, I was not aware of any … sort of negative pressure from Juneau. As a matter of fact, a good friend of mine - Jim Brooks, James Washington Brooks - was the Division of Game head, so he was my boss. Sig Olsen was the …

GW -- Sig Olsen, Junior.

BW -- … Cooperative Wildlife the … the Pittman-Robertson Coordinator, and you know, they weren't going to be coming down hard on me until things got really hot for them.

Uh hum.

BW -- And it didn't happen during this Rampart thing. I think partly because people were recognizing, at all levels of politics, that it just wasn't going to happen. I mean, you could scream and yell and have headlines and whatnot, but you weren't going to have a dam.

GW -- You could be denounced.

BW -- Yeah. So, I … I just didn't have a problem then. The problem came during the oil times.

GW -- Yeah.

BW -- And it was when the … it was clear that exciting things were happening up on the North Slope. And after the 1968 discovery by Atlantic Richfield … then the Fish and Game people … immediately I began getting letters from folks in Fish and Game -- Jack Lentfer and Ron Summerville and others, saying 'boy, you know, I think this is going to be really serious for us.' Thinking of the caribou; thinking of the fish crossings, and so on.

It was primarily the pipeline

BW – Yeah, the pipeline. And, of course, the big development on the Artic Slope which we … we couldn't picture in our heads, 'cause we didn't have a knowledge of what an oil field looked like.

Hum.

BW -- Um … and we were sure that it wouldn't look like west Texas because, in west Texas, the nearness of the wells, and the number of little driveways to them, is dependent on the size of the private parcels. Well, up there it was huge leases. So, they said, 'we'll be just very efficient. We won't cover much ground with gravel.' All that kind of stuff. Anyway, we just didn't know. But, it was the … the problem of … building the pipeline that seemed to us to be the big thing. Well, … in my ACS role, I was sort of able to pick up arguments about this pipeline problem, that weren't really related directly to game or wildlife or biology. For example, when Art Lackenbruch came out with his famous … detailed study of the effect of heated oil pipeline going through permafrost, and geological survey, it was … it was the paper that really turned the world around, at that time. Because all the oil folks were used to building pipelines … '48 inch pipeline -- we do it all the time.' But they were building them in Saudi Arabia; and they were building them in Texas; and so on and so forth. They weren't building them in permafrost. And the Russians who were, were very mum about the oil spills that they were having from pipes that were separating, and, you know, all that sort of stuff. So, when Lackenbruch came out with that, and people like Larry Mayo, [who] had enough knowledge of ice and engineering that they could say 'yes, that's really a problem.' And we began talking more and more with the scientist in the University of Alaska. We realized that that was something that had to be solved before any pipeline was built. And so we were trying for time. Well, I was able to bring those things out; to act like a reporter and just go and …

GW -- Or ask questions.

BW -- Ask questions. And … that was the one time when it was … actually, by then I was with the University of Alaska – 1970 / '71, that William A. Wood called me up to his office one time and said …

Now he's president of the University?

BW – Yeah, president of the University. And he said, 'you know, bob, tell me about this pipeline business. We've had some complaints from folk's downtown that you're talking about the pipeline and you don't like it.' And I said, 'yep, that's right.' And he said 'why?' And I told him why. And he said, 'well, you know, I've been talking with Chuck Belky and he kind of agrees with you.' He was in the Engineering Department at the time. And … anyway, we had this chat, and to his credit he said, 'I'm getting flak from the businessmen downtown who want the University to be quiet. As far as I'm concerned, you can go on and keep on saying what you have said, because I can find no reason why you shouldn't. It's within your prerogative as an academic to say these things.' So, anyway, I actually got backing from him. That was the one time when I … I got really up front, direct, sort of people calling me and putting me on the carpet. Now, indirectly, a couple of years earlier, Auggie Reets was the commissioner of Fish and Game. He had been appointed by Walter Hickle. And … who did he replace? Walt Kirkness? I've forgotten. Actually, yeah, I think it was. in any case, Auggie Reets, whose knowledge of biology was thin, and scattered, … decided to send out a memo to all of the troops saying you could not be an officer of, and he listed, the Sierra Club, the Alaska Conservation Society, … and I've forgot whether he included Audubon …

GW -- Wilderness society …

BW -- …and Wilderness Society. Yeah. He didn't mention anything about the Miners Association, or the Sportsmen Association, or the Chambers of Commerce. That was ok, I guess. But you couldn't be an officer in these other groups. And I said, 'whoops! Wait a minute. That doesn't sound right to me.' So, I … I got the Alaska Public Employees Association – APEA - at the time it … it's the union, on my side. And they saw the danger

of that kind of a thing, across the board. Any … any commissioner writing such a thing would have affronted the same principle. So, they began producing a lot of flak. And finally, although I … I quite over it. I just said, that, you know, I … for now I'm going to resign from ACS. Which I did. But I'm resigning under protest, and I … I'm on my way. And … so … I guess it was six or eight or ten months later that I had an opportunity to go as conservation lobbyists for the three groups, and I spent 1970 in … lobbying. And that was the opportunity to leave. But, meanwhile, the uproar was great enough that Auggie Reets … he passed on to greener pastures. I don't mean heaven. I think he just went to, you know, some other place.

Uh huh

BW -- But … the fellow who took over there kept the executive order on the books. But he never enforced it. But he wouldn't ever take it off the books either.

I see

BW -- So it was kind of a stalemate. For all I know, it's still on the books. I … I don't know. but it really was one of those things that … that made me realize that my long term home was probably not Fish and Game, but the University, where I could, I guess, think about a broader range of things than ptarmigan biology and waterfowl. And also … I loved to teach. But also be freer to speak out.

Uh hum.

GW – Well, it was lots of fun. We could pass … in the ACS, we could pass the officers around, you know, so that … no one had an ego that wanted to be, particularly …

BW -- Right

GW -- And Celia Hunter was usually the secretary and so she didn't have … she didn't have a job that was in danger.

BW -- Only that job. She was, for a while, she was volunteering. Then she was paid a pittance. You know, I remember one example of this trading jobs bit. in the year in which the Creamers Field proposal came up, to be purchased by the state, Jim King of the Fish and Wildlife Service, lived in Fairbanks at the time, had come to me and said, 'you know, Bob, that place would make a great refuge.' Well, Jim had come up in 1948 to work for Charlie Creamer as a milk hand, a milker. And he liked the place, of course. So by the early / mid '60s, when Charlie Creamer's dairy had too many bugs in the milk and he couldn't sell it any more, it was for sale. And Jim King thought it would make a good refuge. And I thought so too. And I was in a good position at Fish and Game to, sort of, promote it as a waterfowl refuge of some sort. But, what we needed was a community organization to take it over as a project and raise money for it and get it done politically. Well, I happened to be president of ACS at that time. So what we did is … Dan Swift took over as president, and I dropped to vice-president. And Dan was then the front person for all the meetings that we had on … on the a … on Creamers Field. Meanwhile, I found that John Butrovich was very much in favor of this refuge. It was kind of a nice, clean thing. He was a duck hunter -- he had gone out to Minto Flats a lot -- and he hunted with Dick McIntyre. And he had a lot of power, and enjoyed using the political power. but he thought, you know, Charlie Creamer will get his dollars, the kids will have a place to watch ducks, the snowmobilers will be out there in the … in the winter, and the dog musher's, and it'll be good for the town. It's not saleable real estate. Every time you dig a hole there you hit water, right? So, anyway, everything sounded good to him. And it would be federal or state money doing it. And so he was on our side. And all we had to do in ACS was to get the auction money. And this is where Mary Shields had her class out making cookies and selling cookies at cookie sales …

GW -- Well, Mary didn't even have car then. But she had her dog, Cabbage, with his little packs.

BW -- Yeah.

GW -- And so what … she'd go into a grocery store and gotten a whole bunch of … boxes … of cake mix and when … College Road … and you could stop anywhere in College Road and it wouldn't cause a traffic back … she would go

up and down College Road and people would stop and she would give them the cake mix and you were supposed to bake a cake … usually it was kids … some kids group, and then they had a little grocery store down there at the …

BW -- The College Inn?

GW – Yeah.

BW – Yeah.

GW -- And so the kids … then they had the kids down there selling the cakes. and it was … and it was the early … anyway, it … they had a snow storm. and so, there was a little grocery down there and he … they invited the kids to come in, but … these … yous … Mary just went up and down with … and anybody that stopped got a … you baked a cake and took it down … I mean, everybody got in the act at … the … one of the strongest help we had, of course, was the Ladies Garden Club.

BW -- Uh hum!

GW -- They came … I mean … they also saved the rocks up on the … the (-)

BW -- Oh the grapefruit rocks.

GW -- Grapefruit rocks.

BW -- Yeah.

GW -- That's the only kind of picnic spot really on the whole … what isn't swamp or trees … and so … but … and then … then there was the start of the … of the … Alpine Club. And that's the one place you can practice belaying - on granite.

BW -- Hum. That's right.

GW -- And between the Ladies Garden Club … they stopped putting the pipeline … they were going to put a … a … a … what you call it …communication center there …

BW -- Oh, yeah.

GW -- … for the … and … so the Ladies Garden Club and the … Alpine Club stopped that.

BW --But, now, they were also involved in raising money for … for Creamers Field? Is that what you're saying?

GW -- No. But, I was just saying … how the small … it's another example …..

End of Tape 1 Side 1

BW – are you … operable … still? Yeah. I was going to mention that it was quite a time for Fairbanks as a community … the 1967 flood had put a four foot mark on up everybody's wall in greater Fairbanks. So, you know, a lot of costs to private individuals. And it was the time that the St. Joe's body shop really needed to be replaced, and so they were raising funds for the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. And at the same time, we were trying to get this money. It was really only a few thousand dollars -- 5 or 6 or 7 thousand dollars or something. It doesn't seem like much now, but sure seemed like a lot then.

GW -- Sure was a lot then.

BW --And so, it almost seemed highly improbable that we would be able to collect that public money for this little refuge and sort of be (-) …

GW -- Well, when things …

BW -- … Fairbanks. But it worked.

GW -- It's the place where the ducks all … you know, even then … they …

BW -- Geese and ducks.

GW -- Geese and ducks would come in, in the spring, and everybody went down to watch … it was part of the spring … things that you did … just go down and watch them come in. so you had … a lot of people wouldn't have been on … care much about environmental things, but we want a place to go down and watch the spring … when … they …

BW -- Sure.

GW -- That's (-) opening of spring, go down and watch the ducks and geese come in.

BW -- This was an example of things that happened … where ACS here was partly a statewide organization, partly a local chapter, but it spawned a people who would grab onto a project and run with it on their own.

GW -- In their …

BW -- And, for example, the real story of Creamers Field comes after it was purchased, and then the whole development of it, with the boardwalks, and the … the nature orientation, and the feeding of the birds, and stuff. All that was done by people like Gail Mayo, and Larry Mayo, and lots of others, who were coming at it from the standpoint of … what was it … Artic Audubon Society … (continues talking but unable to decipher over Ms. Woods voice.)

GW -- Oh they became very … and they turned …

BW -- And Friends of Creamers Field was formed, and so on. And it was nothing that ACS had to keep on the official books, 'cause it was going to keep going as a community project, and keep rolling, and …

GW -- The other …

BW -- … evolving.

GW -- … other thing that was just happenstance is that all that he's been discussing took place … and we got it … even the … the governor, I think it was Hickle, came and backed it …

BW -- Yeah. Yeah.

GW -- … and the Chamber of Commerce backed it. We had …

BW -- (-) Butrovich was a Republican.

GW -- … but that … if we had only … and we got that just the year before the pipeline started. And … they didn't have anyplace to put the pipe. That would have been the perfect place to put the pipe, it's right near the railroad. It was … and then that would belong to them and that would've been prime development … for … you know … the town would have just gone that way. and we got it … the … what he talked about … was just happenstance by a lot of … few people working on it … keep … working on it … and a few organizations, and sort of, just the community thing, that just sort of grew … before it, if you weren't for it, well, you're not one of us … even the chamber of commerce. And … then if it had been a year later, they'd say 'well, that land … we … sell it to the pipeline company' and they could've then … that would have been when we had … really,

there'd been little houses up every half acre ... or whatever … few feet, I suppose, by then. It was … would have been prime … saleable property. We just got it the year before. That was lucky.

BW -- Does anyone know, as an aside, whether any of the Creamer family is still in Fairbanks?

GW -- Yeah. Every once in while … the … his son, who kinda was … he didn't like this going …

BW -- No he preferred to sell.

GW – now, he's been made … he's … anything they have anything to do … well, one of my best friends is … Friends of Creamers Dairy started this ... and so every time they have some occasion there, he's asked to make speech …

BW -- Oh, good.

GW -- … and he's turned … he's … now, yes, he was … grew up there. Yes, he talk about the old days.

BW -- You know, that's really good though. It's funny how people will change and evolve as the times change.

GW -- Well he's …

BW -- Things that didn't look good from your life … from one perspective at 40 look a lot more fun … at 70 …

GW -- Well now he's …

BW -- … or whatever.

GW -- He's a … he's a … you know, he's older and he's … he's … he's Charlie's … Creamer's son. He remembers the old days and so he'll be asked to speech … he loves it.

I have a question you … Roger, you're always asking about this issue or that issue that they … that ACS was successful at. were there issues that you fought against that you lost?

BW -- Pipeline.

GW -- Pipeline. Yeah.

BW -- Yeah. We lost lots.

GW -- They could've …

BW -- And many of the 'wins,' at least the big ones … were not because of us. I mean, Edwin Teller didn't back off from Project Chariot because of the Alaska Conservation Society. Rampart Dam was not built because we opposed it. It was not built because it was ridiculous and … and federal money wasn't gonna be spent in Alaska on a big dam. That was … it was past the big dam era. They'd all been built, and nobody wanted any big ones anymore. And, so, we lost lots. And I would say the 'wins' that we had … and, of course it's a cliché in conservation that you can win one time right after another, but you only loose once. Once it's gone -- it's gone. And that's not, strictly speaking, true, but … it's … it's certainly to a great deal true. But I think that it … for a … for a local area, and all of the other areas, whether it's Petersburg and the Petersburg Creek issue … all of the areas where conservation groups operate, they loose a lot and they win some.

How 'bout going back to one of the early issues - predator control and the bounty system. Both [of] you were active in that; both of you wrote strongly about it. How'd you happen to become involved in it?

GW -- Well, with … there an economics … we didn't try to fight it on ecological things or save the wolves. Where's that bounty … how much bounty are you paying off to whom? And … that … and then we had … actually we had two senators that were Republicans down there. When they looked into the economics of it they thought, 'gad, this is costing us a lot of money.' And what are we getting? Because the natives weren't killing female wolves. That was … (-) worth money catching poor wolves. And … so I think that … it … there … lots of times things were really … stress the economics of it. And we, none of us, were particularly good at that, you know.

But that wasn't your motivation … the economics … was it.

BW -- Well,

(-)

GW -- No. But that was the thing that you could win on

BW -- Yeah

GW – Because (-) …

But what … what motivated … why did you …

BW – Well, I was fresh from reading Aldo Leopold.

GW -- Oh, yeah.

BW -- And you know, when you read *THINKING LIKE A MOUNTAIN* and then when you're reading, as a boy reads, of all … all the westerns. I mean, the wolves have a very special place. And very often they're harassed by folks; shot by the cowboys; etc; etc.

Did you read Seton … by any chance?

BW – Yeah.

GW -- I did.

BW – Ernest Thompson Seton.

GW – yeah.

(-) just a second. Tell me about the … Seton what you read as a child and what the influence may have been on your view of predators.

GW – Well, I did too. I … the *THREE LITTLE … TWO LITTLE SAL… SAVAGES* and *ROLF IN THE WOODS* … and what was the other one that …

See for those of us who don't know who Seton is …

BW -- Ernest Thompson Seton

What … what kind of books were they?

GW -- Kinda half children's books, but more teenager books.

Like adventure books, or nature books?

GW -- Nature books and … well, they were different … *ROLF IN THE WOODS* was about an orphan kid that grew up in the … before the Revolutionary War … that was adopted by an Indian.

BW -- You know, it was kind of combination - a hybrid you might say - between Beatrice Potter and -- Peter Cottontail -- and Farley Mowat. Both are fiction … and here's … Ernest Thompson Seton was a Canadian by the way, who wrote these books for children – youngsters -- about animals; and he anthropomorphized …

GW -- And also Indians.

BW -- … the fox, you know, and … and the … he gave them persona, and adventures. But he was also a very good observer, and he knew a lot about animal - wild animal – behavior. So it gave them … sort of an honesty to them that … it was … he was very, very well known in sort of a classic nature … a nature writer.

GW -- Yeah. (-)

So he was an influence in your life as well. And Ginny's talked about his influence with her.

BW -- Yeah. Yeah. He wasn't … as big an influence for me. I didn't … I didn't read *THE TWO LITTLE SAVAGES*. I know I would have listed it as one of his titles, but I didn't ever read it.

GW -- And *ROLF IN THE WOODS*.

BW -- But I … I think that I forget … *LOBO, KING OF THE CURRUMPAW* is the name of a short story about wolves. And he had several stories about wolves that came to bad ends usually. Somebody trapped them, or shot them.

GW -- And he had what … it's what you called 'wood craft' … that the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts and the Campfire Girls … that was … you … 'woods craft' (-) how to go out and make bow beds. Imagine going out and cutting down trees to make bow beds. That's how … first camping trip I went on, you made the bow bed.

BW -- But he expressed an ethic about wildlife and relating to (-)

GW – Well, sometimes it was fictionized, and it was for young ones. Other times … they had ones that were really for adults.

?? – Yeah.

BW – Well, I did come with an inclination to want to see wolves, and to admire them. And never seen one, you know, and never thought I would be so lucky. But then I also went through biology in universities … wildlife conservation at universities, where the profession was just beginning to question predator control. And Paul Errington's work on muskrats in Iowa … showing that mink do kill lots of muskrats, but never kill them out. So he could … he had found lots of evidence that there is this uneasy shifting balance between the prey and predator. And so we were beginning to question all the bounties that Pennsylvania …

GW -- And then comes Aldo … Aldo Leopold …

BW -- … had on foxes, and Alaska had on wolves. And so, when I got to Alaska and discovered that the federal government had a bounty system, and the state, and … the poison process … lots of people poisoning wolves … and who was the fellow in Palmer who killed all of the wolves, by poison, in the Nelchina … very famous …

GW -- Guess I don't remember that.

Was that Frank (-)?

BW -- No. No. It wasn't Frank. I … I remember, I met him …

GW -- Well, he wanted …

BW -- In early May of 1956 he took me up the Little Talkeetna … the Little Susitna Road, and I went into the area to look for ptarmigan, that was my first year on ptarmigan …

GW -- At one time when we were … my husband was a ranger in the park for a year, before he decided he didn't want to be moved to Yosemite. He was supposed to … all rangers were to shoot any wolf … on sight … and some of them thought it was great sport. Others, like my husband, never saw a wolf. He could go up the (-) never seen one.

BW -- Never seen one.

GW -- I remember one guy that …

BW -- Gosh, there was a fresh track but …

GW -- The … one of the ranger … young ranger thought this was just great, carried a gun and come home with a sled load of dead wolves. And Woody and couple of other rangers put them all on his front porch … propped up, you know, dead wolves. And it's … and … no … I think that the wolf thing was that we … we won on just looking to see how much money you're paying out, where is it going? And that … some … sometimes the economics was something you could win, where the ecology wouldn't have …

As … as roger said, that's not why you …

BW --- No.

… were against it

BW -- Motives.

What motivated you to oppose it?

GW -- Just being around them, I guess. McKinley Park … and then what … I think Aldo Leopold, when he writes about … when he was young ranger in the Gila and, having shot a wolf, 'cause you … what's … what you were supposed to do, and went down and saw the … the green eyes …

BW -- Green-fire die in its eyes.

GW -- Fire in its eyes dies. Right. And that sticks with you.

BW -- Uh hum.

GW -- And then you see them where… when … when I was living in McKinley Park and … you know … I think, to me … it's ironic that they make a varmint out of the very first animal that mankind, when he became homo sapien, invited into his hearth to be part of his family. And they … and they still … they make him a varmint. Something you have to kill. He's dangerous; he might eat your child. I mean, all these myths that … and but yet … they like dogs …

BW -- Who do eat children.

GW -- Yeah. Right.

BW -- Well, again, I … I don't know exactly sort of why the wolf bounty was finally taken off, but I think it was sort of … it was doomed, because the fresh crop of people in the state Fish and Game were kind of in control. It was not a migratory game bird; it was gonna be managed by the state. And all of the young biologists wanted to get rid of the bounty; certainly wanted to get rid of the … the poisoning, and that was done immediately. But it took about 4 or 5 years to finally get the bounty off because …

GW -- I think it was economics.

BW -- … there were … oh, I don't think so. The state could afford those few dollars. But the thing is that, at that time, there were relatively few people, quite a lot of game in the 1960s. It was good hunting for everybody north of the Yukon. There were no limits on the number of caribou you could take, because there was no access for anybody but those who lived there, you know. So it was really a … in hindsight it was a time when we could afford to relax a bit on stuff like wolves. And the Game Division got the Board of Game to classify wolves - in their very first session - as game animals rather than as varmints or … nuisance game or … unclassified game -- was one of the euphemisms they used. And then it was a battle to fight the specific legislators in southeast and in central Alaska who just hated wolves, or had constituents who hated wolves, and just clung to the very last … there was a fellow in southeast who insisted once, in the mid to late 1960s, that Fish and Game hire helicopters and go out and shoot wolves along the shore in the island where he hunted deer. And that kind of thing was sort of the last little flare up of the fire that had died back. Well, now of course, we don't have a bounty, but we've got Fish and Game biologists who, whatever they think, are running scared in front of the native and non-native hunters who say they want to kill more moose and caribou; therefore you've got to get rid of all the wolves. And so were back killing wolves probably more of them …

GW – Yeah.

BW -- … than were killed by poisons.

GW -- Yeah.

BW -- So it's … it's a little bit ironic.

GW -- Well, of course, it … poisons you got everything. But … I think a funny story was Frank Blazer who was quite a wolf … only good wolf was a dead wolf … he came out with his acolytes, I think there were … well one of the was … friends … we were just down in Juneau, now, … was just here at the university … so, they came up because we had the … the Crusler's were staying with us and they had their wolves … so, what, the five they had … they were over at Celia's cabin … so, I was … happened to be over there when he came with his

class and … Celia's dog which was, you know … it was a sled dog … was lying on the front porch and I heard him say, 'now, you can see that that's a wol…' he came out to see the wolves, because they were … Crusler's had them staked out over … at her place …

Oh, this was Herb and Louis Crusler?

BW -- Louise.

Louise.

GW -- Louise, yeah. And … so I was sitting there … out there and I heard Blazer say to his class … or … this … this group of young men that had come out to see the wolves. And he says, 'now,' … and he was looking at Celia's dog … which was on the front porch, the other … wolves were staked out behind in the woods … he says, 'now, you can see that that's a wolf not … not a dog.'

BW -- And explained carefully why.

GW -- Really spreading it thick.

BW -- Right. Right. Right. Well, it was …

GW -- Kinda funny.

BW -- I have another incident, about that same thing. It's a little bit hard to tell, especially when there was only a front foreleg … to show for the bounty. That's what they … you had to have … and what … was it … ears? Or … or scalp or something?

GW -- Or ears, it was supposed to …

BW -- Yeah. But also the front leg, the Fish and Game required that you bring that in for sealing, to sort of prove it.

GW -- 50 dollars bounty. 50 dollars.

BW -- Anyway, one time I was in the Fairbanks Fish and Game office, as biologist there, and a man came in, I know his name but I won't mention it because he may still be alive, he came in with 8 wolves that he had just landed and shot in winter on the Chatanika river. And Peter E. K. Shepherd was the biologist at the time in the office who allowed as how he would process them for bountying. And he looked at them, and he kinda looked at me. And he looked at the dogs and … or the animals … and he said 'well, ok, we'll bounty them for you.' And so he certified to the bounty. But then, after this guide left, Pete said 'that was a sled dog team, and I'll betcha anything we hear about it.' A day later this trapper came in from the Chatanika he said 'you know, what? I couldn't believe it. This guy landed and shot all my dogs!' And we said "oh dear, isn't that terrible.' Well, we didn't want to get into a contest between this trapper who lost his dogs and the hunter who shot them. And we just thought 'well, it'll blow over.' Which it did. And the state was out 50 times 8 -- 400 dollars.

Well, Bob, it seems to me like … very much like Aldo Leopold, you combined ecological and philosophical insights in your work. Is that … that true, do you think?

BW -- I guess, lately. I guess when you can't do anything anymore you turn to philosophy, right?

Well, I look at your book that was written in the 70s and it … it's very philosophical.

BW -- Might have been there.

I … I guess you go beyond the specifics of the animals, but … to what it means … the issue … what it means to people.

BW -- Well, you remember, Roger, that in my teaching, I kind of … I was … just extremely lucky and given a chance by all my university bosses – Fred Dean and Bonita Neiland

mostly – to design courses that I liked to teach. And I taught 'Wildlife Biology' and then I taught 'Wildlife Politics.' And then I began thinking, 'you know, what really effects wildlife up here is … how land is used. And therefore, since most of it is federal or state, then land use planning is really kinda the crux of where decisions are made.' So I began developing courses with land use planning in them. And then I said 'Ah, wait a minute. There's economics behind that, because the planning is driven by oil discoveries, or mineral discoveries, or timber, or fish, or something. And therefore, I ought to know something about natural resource economics.' And that began … began to show up in the classes. And then I thought to myself, 'But, you know, these decisions are still made by politicians, somewhere, about how to use federal and state land, and what I'd like to teach is how science has any role in -- if at all -- in making these decisions about public land.' And the reason I had to bring in this sort of science question was that I was almost teaching pure political science, and I wouldn't have been allowed to do that by the Political Science Department. But they had no interest in teaching what I was teaching. But it was ok, since I sort of disguised it. But I had 'Natural Resource Politics' 'Natural Resource Legislation' …

GW -- (-) philosophy, because I …

BW -- … all of those things. but then I finely said, 'ok,' … this is after a few years of teaching this, you get a set of ideas in your mind and you build up a picture of how the world works and then something comes along and inside … or conversation with somebody … and another whole world develops. Well, I realized that, as far as my mind would go, probably, is to ask the question, "Why do we think the way we do towards nature? Why do people do stupid things, like killing wolves, and so on?" and I realized that if you really traced it back, in our society, there's three big things: Christianity, and what religion says about the relation of people and nature and God; and there's capitalism -- which is our system for getting and distributing money; and there is science -- which is a brand new invention of humanity. Which drives a lot of what we do. And it's got its good sides and its bad sides. But those three things together are why we act the way we do about most things. Obviously, there's an emotional base to everything. But a lot of those emotions are based on things that affront our inner most thoughts about, you know … man has dominion over nature, and if anybody says that I don't … 'I' am man … then I'm very much affronted. I shouldn't have to keep out of this area because it should wilderness. I wanna have dominion over it. And it echoes far back in Sunday School, right? So …

GW -- And (-)

BW -- And so I began teaching a course in environmental ethics which asked the question "Why … what … how do we picture this universe? How do we picture the place we live in? How do we react / act towards it? And why?" And so that's how I began, and that's where I ended my … my career in teaching. but that began … as I was teaching it I was also learning about it, 'cause the kids, of course, have just as much right to talk about their orientations and feelings and philosophies as I did. And … and all of this stuff kinda mixed all together and it would come out in … a little bit in that … *[Alaska:] Promises To Keep* a lot more in *Messages From Earth [-- Nature And Human Prospect In Alaska]* and then stuff I've written since then, mostly short essays, it comes out even fuller blown.

GW -- Are they mostly in Canadian publications or ….

BW -- Well, yeah. And …

GW -- I haven't run across them.

BW – Ginny, I'll send some stuff up because we've got a …

GW -- Wish you would.

BW – We've got a bulletin that's almost exactly the same as the Alaska Conservation bulletin, our review. It's the …

GW -- You mean on Salt Spring Island?

BW -- On Salt Spring Island. It's called *The Acorn* because we have Garry Oaks there …

GW – Ohhh.

BW -- …on Salt Spring Island. And … I've been editing it for a while, and therefore I can write whatever I want. If I have to submit it to another editor there's always the question whether it will get published. But, anyway, I've written a lot of stuff. And it's fun – writing. but I find that a lot of things -- out of family living, out of the newspapers, out of just all these past experiences that we've shared … stuff kinda starts to come together and you begin really asking, you know, 'Why do I behave this way? Why do I think this way?'

GW -- Do you know O*rion* magazine?

BW -- Yeah, I do. I do.

GW -- Well, write for it.

BW -- *Orion* magazine and *Orion Afield*, I think …

GW -- Yeah. They only do the … they dropped it and … they just … *Orion.* It's a … very expensive but …

BW -- Oh, ok. Yes, it is.

GW -- … pick it up and … I can see you writing …

BW -- writing for it. Yeah.

GW -- I don't know … I don't think you make much money out of it but you'll find a lot people you know … writing … really good philosophical stuff.

BW -- Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

GW -- Not always … environmentally oriented but … talking about the same things you're talking about.

BW -- Well, people I admire, Alaskans like John Haines and Richard Nelson, for a couple of examples, people that have come out of some particular … channel in life and … and get to the point where it's kind of like a cadis fly larva, collecting all these little fragments around it, and then walking around with this house that it lives in made of fragments. Well, they live in this house of fragments and they understand it and they begin to see how it … how it was pieced together. Richard Nelson is a wonderful writer and … it's the kind of thing I would like to be able to do; it's the type of thinking I would like to be able to …

Well it certainly is. And I know you succeeded Ginny as editor of the Alaska Conservation Review.

GW -- No. We traded it back and forth.

BW -- Oh, we traded. Yeah.

GW -- And it's the only thing that anybody ever had me … any officer or anything, was because everybody else worked for the government. I didn't. I couldn't I couldn't loose my job.

BW -- Ginny you always were a good writer and a good editor. And *Wood Smoke* of course outlasted the *Review* … the *Conservation Review* …

But Ginny …

GW -- I remember … this story … it reminds me of Fred Dean and I … you were out doing field work … same place you did yours …

BW -- Up at eagle summit?

GW -- Yeah. And then they didn't plow the road and we had some big issue coming up … and I think it was probably … probably was the one on the … dropping the … using a A bomb for …

BW -- Project Chariot.

GW -- Project Chariot … I can't remember if it … but Fred was the only one in town and he was … I think was he … he may have been the president …

BW -- Could have been. (-)

GW -- Well … he was something. Anyway, he and I were sitting at that table writing about this and it was (-) gonna be the whole issue and he said we have to get (-) permission … I mean we … went past him and so I think it was Les Varick that skied in … to get your … is this ok?

BW -- Came down the hill off the (-) highway or something?

GW -- Yeah. Right. It … well … the part that wasn't …

BW -- Right. Right.

GW -- You … you … you … you were … isolated …

BW -- Yeah.

GW -- … and the … 'cause they didn't plow the whole thing. And … but … I think it was … we got Les to … ski in and get your permission. And he said let it fly.

BW -- Let her fly.

GW -- And I think that was the one we did the whole issue. That finally we got back to the Secretary of Interior …

BW -- I know there was a whole issue on Rampart Dam; there was a whole issue on Project Chariot.

GW -- Yeah … and I … I don't know which one it was. I think it was the … I think it was the … anyway …

BW -- Project Chariot.

GW -- Well the thing we … we needed was your ok.

BW -- Uh hum.

GW -- 'Cause I … you were either with Fish and Game or else … university. I don't know what the …

BW -- Fish and Game probably.

GW -- Fish and Game. And we didn't think we should … and I think you were also president then, maybe. I can't remember.

BW -- Could be.

GW -- We … we … we rotated a lo… only time that Celia and I were something was when it was … your jobs were in jeopardy, 'cause of the issue.

Well, it's interesting that both of you did a lot of writing. You wrote for the newsletter and for other things.

GW -- Well, …

Not all activists do that kind of writing.

GW -- Well, …

BW -- We both did and …

Looking at the record, you started a very philosophical approach towards conservation, and … the other people, many other contributors, wrote more scientifically. Both you two, and I'm looking, Bob, at you, when you took over as editor here, continued this trend of not only saying what's at risk, but what's it mean in the larger scheme of things. Which is what interested me in … in both your approaches. But, we've been talking about the economic arguments that we've used, and sometimes they aren't the main ones. But, Bob, it's interesting, in 1962 you wrote an article, a two page article, for the ACS *Review* … said "Weeden On Selling Wilderness" and … I should have showed you this before we talked here, but your point was this …

BW -- Am I going to be disturbed?

No. I think it's really interesting. I'd like you to comment on it. You're … you're … you're saying that we … we try to save wilderness and wildness by talking about the business aspects and the economic benefits, but you conclude here, and I'll just quote, you said, "This dollar determination …" and, you know, you're talking about the benefit of … and … and the argument, " … but it goes too far. It cheapens us." And you're basically arguing that we have to speak from the heart, what we really believe. And wilderness shouldn't be determined on basically financial basis.

BW – Well, for all of … the lifetimes of several civil rights movements, reform movements, whether its feminism or civil rights or environmentalism, arguments of convenience, where you use the language that seems to be most likely to be understood by your audience, it's either political power, or it's economics, because one of the few things governments can do is distribute money, right? So … and they listen to economic arguments. So, we've always used those things. But every single one of those is vastly deeper and more meaningful

human issue, you know. Any of those I mentioned, and many others. And so we're caught in that, and in … someone is … as a matter of fact, after Al Gore lost the election in 2000 …

GW -- If he really did.

BW -- Yeah. If he really did. Someone wrote a very searching … either long article or book, about the possibility that the … the 'greenies' have really lost the bat… the … the war, even while winning battles, because they have taken these shallower arguments of convenience, and not insisted on talking about their central values, because it was the values thing that became extremely prominent. And it seemed as though the Republicans captured the whole idea of values -- human values -- and in a time of confusion

GW -- Mostly monetary values.

BW -- It's nice to … it's nice to be … No. They're talking about family values, and all of these things … just the right to speak out as if you were friends with God. I mean, all of these things. But it seems to me that the Democrats wanted to talk about issues, and issues are defined in a narrower bucket, a smaller bucket. They're defined by economics and … whose … whose land or … it … it's some physical thing that's at … at stake here. But the … the actual human background, why it's important to do this, is often … just lost. Because it seems to general; to 'motherhoody'; to something or other. And it is interesting to have you read that because … I came back to it just a couple of months ago in something I wrote which said that, you know, I'm personally finally coming around to being comfortable talking abut why I really feel the way I feel. And it's not … and it's maybe the first time in my life I've really been wanting to do that, because I see how important it is -- both to me and to other people. And sometimes, it's these simple things that are the most powerful. And all of this stuff that requires a detailed knowledge of engineering or biology or economics or genetics or whatever it is, that's kind of at a different level, isn't it. You … you have to play that game. Otherwise, you're out in Cloud 9, and nobody listens to somebody who levitates up to Cloud 9 and just doesn't know how to get back down to earth. But, on the other hand, if that's all you are, is a technician …

GW -- I think that …

BW -- … comparing this with that and saying this is slightly better than that, on the basis of abstract arguments, just isn't going to hack it.

GW -- I think that's what grabbed us when we first started thinking ecologically …

BW -- Yeah.

GW -- … without even knowing what it … the word meant was Aldo Leopold.

BW -- Yeah. Sure.

GW -- He … that's the essence.

BW -- Yeah

GW -- Very practical …

BW -- And he was a good practical biologist, …

GW -- Right.

BW -- … too. But he had this larger sense of …

GW -- yeah. And … and … also the vocabulary to just touch you.

How's that Ginny? How did it touch you?

GW -- Well, you could read by … you know …when you first hear about ecology and you start reading textbook type stuff or somebody that's an expert or a biologist or the … yeah … an expert, and you pick up Aldo Leopold, never heard of the guy, I just happened to pick up the book, what was down at the park … they had it in the park library, and I started reading it and … wow. he has the …

without being holier-than-thou, without being too scientific, or trying to be funny, or trying to be … 'I speak your language' type of … I don't … something about Aldo Leopold. I think, reading … you can pick up any of the things that he's written, and he speaks to you. Even though it's been years … but people don't … now [people] know what ecology is and what environmentalism is and so all that … but there is something about his writing that he doesn't get ac… to academic, neither does he get, you know, 'I have the … this is the … this is the answer.' There's just … just a good writer, and has a way of using words that just get to you.

BW -- I pick up a book called *SCIENTIST DEBATE GAIA* not long ago. It's a 2004 book I think.

GW -- Who wrote it?

BW -- It's quite … quite scientific. It's a bunch of people who wrote it, starting from the beginning with Lovelock and (-) and so on. but … they're … in one of the essays there, they refer back, very respectfully, to Aldo Leopold and his comment about saving all the pieces, you know, and that kind of thing. And so he had managed, in the 1930s and 1940s and early 1950s, to really say some things that have lasted, and will last, you know, a century or more.

Ginny I …years ago when I talked to you about the Artic Refuge, you told me how you discovered Leopold, and you said, at that time, what really connected you was his linking of ecological thinking to the concept … and I can almost quote you, that man is a member of a community of life, and that's what connected you as a non-biologist to … to Leopold. Is that … does that work for you, Bob? That he …

BW -- Oh, yeah. Yeah. Very much. Well, first of all people **are** a community of life, when you think of our bodies and all of the parasites that we host and … and the things we eat and take in and so on. And we are a community of …

GW -- And then when they find out that there's just a … a … one or two brownie points between us and … and the apes or … or any other particular animal.

BW -- As modern medicine gets more …

GW -- (-) our gene pool is about the same.

BW -- … clever at it we … we are a community of life in another way. I'm … I've got somebody's arm and somebody else's knee and … maybe a frontal lobe from somebody else and a hind toe from somebody else. I don't know how many points each of them is going to get -- debit or credit at Saint Peters (-) Pearly Gates, but …

GW -- Well, you don't have to go through it.

BW -- Let's see, Bob Weeden, some of you passes, but boy, other parts of you are real bummers. Anyway, I wrote a … think it was economic argument, I wrote a … article once for *Fish and Game* magazine called "On Wooden Nickels, Trojan Horses, and Lonely Drummers." And it … I had been asked to contribute a kind of a keynote thing to a symposium on whether or not Fish and Game should be trying to hire economists to figure out how much a sport fish is caught by a sport fisherman vs. caught in the net by a commercial fisherman. All that kind of translating wild things and their uses into a commodity. and the 'Wooden Nickel' is when I pointed out that money doesn't really have any fixed value, because what you've got is a price of something which is what you pay in the store and … but the cost of something … again this is a both Leopold and … and … what's his name … Walden Pond … Thoreau …

GW -- Oh, Thoreau …

BW -- … the actual cost of something is what you have to give to get it -- which might include the destroyed countryside or, you know …

GW -- Time.

BW -- … the energy to transport it, etc., etc. So, you've got price and cost. And then you've got value in utility. And the price of a loaf of bread to someone who's burping from the last meal still is a dollar and a half. The value is pretty marginal. But to someone who is starving, the price is still a dollar and a half, but its value is enormous, right? So, price, cost, and value, are just fuzzy, fuzzy things. There is nothing hard about them. So you're taking wooden nickels, right? and then the … the 'Trojan Horse' is if you go on this path you're inviting the economist into the tent, and you're likely to find out that you're harboring something you don't really want to harbor. Because sometimes economists calculations will show that the moose will win; sometimes they'll show that the hydro-dam wins. And there, when you're dependent on that article -- that argument -- where are you. And then the 'Lonely Drummer' came in when I said, 'you know, it seems like the world is going in this direction, everything needs to have a dollar figure put next to it. the real question is whether biologists and the lovers of wildlife can go on their own, and stay aloof, and march to a different drummer.' And it gets back to the arg… what argument wins -- the short term argument that persuades people on economic grounds, or the long term argument on something much deeper.

Should we take a break for a minute?

Sure.

Yep. We're back.

Well one issue that we haven't talked about yet was ANCSA. it was very controversial, and it must have been within Fish and Game, or where you worked, Bob, but I know that you had some role, Bob, and you too Ginny, in … in having language … what became the D2 language, inserted in the Native Claims Settlement Act, so what don't you tell us a little bit about what ACS's role was and what each of you did.

GW -- Well, … you down in Juneau then … he was out kind of a …

BW -- No. No.

GW -- Under Jay Hammond's administration …

BW -- That was '75.

GW -- He had … he took him out of here, down to Juneau, choose him to be his advisor, what was it … your official capacity?

BW -- Division of Policy Development and Planning.

GW -- Oh, boy.

BW -- Director of …

GW -- Yeah.

BW -- So the Dip Dip is what we called it. Or DP squared, either one.

Well, tell me about … as a conservationist what role you had, and then we'll talk about how that related to your state position.

BW -- Yeah. I don't exactly know how … and I … I don't feel like I was personally involved, to any real extent. I don't know exactly how that provision came to be in the Bill. That's kind of high level politics. But I do know that Arlan Tusing was …

GW -- Oh, yeah. I remember him, real well.

BW -- … the first person who ever came out with a public speech in which he talked about the need to broker this deal, to settle the state land claims and the native land claims -- and the federal share, because there was a national interest in these lands as well. And he said the bill cannot do just one -- it cannot isolate out …

GW – Exactly.

BW -- … Native lands, it has to do … look at all three together. And the federal / state land use planning commission proceeded to do that. But Arlan was the one that I remember, who first voiced the idea that that was the only way, politically, to get the job done -- and done right.

GW – Well …

BW -- Do all three together. So, that's, I think that's the origin of … of how the thing came to be … offered the D1 and D2 … but how it sort of got in place, whether it was Ed Wayburn, or who else got it in place, I don't know.

GW -- Well to back up a little bit … what was the (-), the Native land claims was when they had … when we got statehood, there was this written into the statehood thing … that was … when we got it … bought it from Russia, that's right, there was a clause in saying … and lad… the lad… Native land claims 'will be adjudicate' … was put in the … way back there and nobody'd done anything about it, because the natives didn't have a voice. And it wasn't until the … oil, and all of a sudden the Native lands became very important, because that's where they'd struck it and it … this … they … 100 years ago … wait a minute … they always said 'will be adjudicate' … and they never had. Well, the … from my point of view, I was amazed at how fast the Natives, who, you know, those people that live out in bush and live off the land … and most of them probably hadn't gone past the 4th grade, maybe 6th grade education, how sharp they became …guard house low … lawyers. I was amazed at how fast … 'cause I had … when I was flying I had occasion to have to stay over in Native communities and got to know them pretty well and … the … these people that had had no formal … much formal of education … became guard house lawyers. Well, what's the guy from Kotzebue … became very …perm … pol …

(-) Kingsley?

GW -- No.

BW -- (-) Hensley's.

GW -- Willy Hensley, that's the one I'm thinking of. And … to listen to them get up and talk and … they … they really brought that out, and that's what held up the pipeline for a long time, because here it was written, and when they bought it from Russia, and then we became … and again when we became a state, there was always this clause 'will be adjudicate' … well, never had been. Well, they (-) and lived their lives, and been here for hundreds of years doing it, and doing it very successfully, and all of a sudden they … they … they became, politically, very savvy. And I think Willy Hensley was … sample of that.

BW -- Sure.

GW -- And I knew him when he was a little boy, over in Kotzebue. So that … until that … and then the … oil companies actually wanted that to be done, so they kinda sided in with the Natives, because until they did, no one could do anything, politically. So, it was very interesting just being … just to sit … just living up here and not being terrib… really astute … (-) neither of those … to watch the Natives get up and make their speeches and how fast I saw those little boys that I knew over in Kotzebue, when I'd get weathered in over there, how articulate they became, and really that was k… what held up … the … the … for a long time.

Now did the ACS get involved in the …(-)

GW -- Ohhhh, I can't …

BW -- Oh, yeah.

GW -- You couldn't … no … everybody got involved but as far as it being the major issue for us to take up I think we stayed out of it because the … except if you asked our opinion its what … get the same I'm giving you now … but as far as politically, it's … the Natives did it.

So why did you choose to stay … You said you sort of stayed out of it, why?

GW -- Well,… because we weren't Natives. It was their … you're talking for somebody else. Anyway, that we want somebody else in telling us what we should do about the wolves or something.

BW -- You know, Ginny is talking those aspects of the Native Land Claims that are apart from the land issues, because those we really were interested in and spoke out. But when it came to a question of whether there should be … village corporations or only regional, or what kind of revenue sharing should go on, or the amount of the settlement, or whatever, none of that felt like our – mandate, you might say. However, it is interesting that we had an unwitting involvement in getting, in the 1960s, in getting, sort of pushing, this agitation for a settlement forward. We had … I, in Fish and Game, was, as I said before, in charge of the waterfowl stuff, we thought it would be nice to have a waterfowl refuge out in Minto -- the Minto Flats area. In proposing that, we, of course, had on the one hand folks like John Butrovich and … who was the head of the … bank of Fairbanks … the Fairbanks National Bank … First National Bank?

GW -- Then he'd also been down in Juneau, as a representative.

BW -- But he had … he had a cabin out there, and they were duck hunters. Anyway, it was quite a cadre of duck hunters out in Minto who were a bit worried about this idea of a refuge out there. But, in any case, we pursued it but … when the Alaska Conservation Society decided to have a public meeting on the question of this Minto Flats Game Refuge … waterfowl refuge … we got an irate letter from Richard Frank in Minto saying that this was a Native issue. And so we said, 'ok. We'll pay your way to come to this meeting." And we did. And Richard stood up and gave what I had … the first speech I ever heard

about the Native Land Claims, and it was specifically to that Minto area. But, it was, I think my personal, and our recognition of that connection between the Native Land Claims and stuff we were doing with land use, including that waterfowl refuge, that really opened our eyes to … to the bigger issue that was there. Well, that was mid 60s and … then as the whole claims things evolved and Morey Thompson and the Alaska Federation of Natives. And, just as Ginny said, all these really articulate, smart people came and began speaking out in favor of it. The D1 and D2 actions were put into the Bill and finally passed. And I guess D1 just set aside all of the land pending some kind of a … of a claim, and D2 was the identification of the federal interest lands. And we did then, as the Conservation Society, become very much a part of this 'maps on the floor' group. One of the people working with us much of the time was … not Richard Fineberg … the fellow who was … always knew more about the mountains and the creeks and the hills and the boundaries, really knew more, 'cause he had studied these maps so much. You remember, the fellow that was in Juneau and … and he came at … the name will come to me. Anyway, we had …

GW -- Oh wait a minute. I think I know who it is, because he just was honored at … the last winter.

BW -- Could very well be.

GW – Yeah.

BW -- If … if I flip through the bulletin I would know.

GW -- I know … I know who you mean.

BW -- In any case, we had an … a lot of people who spent a lot of time in the country and knew … I mean, Larry Mayo, with his glacier work in these areas, quite well from a very different perspective, a high … a high perspective. And I know some of them, and everybody had something to contribute. People had taken trips in the Brooks Range and various places. So, we felt we were taking part in a very worthwhile exercise. A very superficial one, I might say. I mean, you really don't identify a national interest in 5 million acres by 5 people sitting around with their rumps in the air looking like a bunch of pin tail

ducks and … and pointing fingers at a map. I mean, that's kind of an amateurish way of doing it. The same thing was being done …

GW -- Well but the … collectively it was amazing.

BW -- That's right.

GW -- There would be somebody … usually somebody that had an airplane, or like me who had been hiking up there, long before it was ever thought of a … being a national land, I'd been leading trips up there, and then somebody else that … it would be from quite a few people looking at maps and say 'we should save that' 'that's a very important place.' And Larry, because he was a geologist, and had his own airplane, had … really knew everything … a lot … been a lot of places, and I had been guiding up there and … since the early 70s, so long before they had made any of those parks up there. And just … collectively … or somebody'd hunting up there? Yeah. But it was somebody that would say 'hey, I think we should save this.' And it was all done with maps on the fl… kitchen floors.

BW -- And we … remember that the same thing was being done, probably even more often and more actively and with more persuasive power, by the folks in Anchorage, with their rumps in the air. The Peg Tileston's and …

GW – Yeah.

BW -- All those folks and …

GW -- And probably in Juneau too.

BW -- In Juneau and in Sitka …

GW -- There were lots of people in …

BW -- … for southeast Alaska so all together …

GW -- They'd taken boats there …

BW -- Ed Wayburn, and some of the other folks that were very powerful at the Washington level, leading the big groups like Sierra Club, they had advice from … effectively from scores of people in Alaska, who spent those hours with the maps.

Including yourself.

BW -- Including myself. Sure.

So how does your job at Fish and Game, which is adamantly against having very many federal withdrawals of (-), relate to your personal work here?

BW -- Well, I wasn't with Fish and Game when the … in the decade of 70s. I had already left.

Ok.

BW -- So I was … I was not worried about that. It was difficult in another way though, because I was still very good friends with a lot of Fish and Game people, and especially over the subsistence question, which was a part of it. Apart from the lands, the acreage, it was the question of the use by Native people, and how you frame that subsistence question. That was really divisive. Honestly it … it lost me some friendships. People that I thought I knew and enjoyed being with and we had shared a lot of Fish and Game things together, all of a sudden they weren't there anymore with me. They were anti-fed, anti-D2. They were concerned about the feds taking over wildlife management through the subsistence thing. Lots of state / federal jealousies came up. And, just the entire idea of a hundred million acres of wilderness that there would be very limited access to was an affront to their idea of wildlife management.

GW -- Well even when we finally got the refuge, and that was not the D2 … not the D2 part, but just … it was called the Range then … even after we got it, who … who … who shall administer it? And at … who … and I remember this is when Stevens started … got appointed to the job he's had ever since … We never elect anybody. We … if you elect anybody, you're going to have them for your lifetime. That … I don't know what kind of a government that is, but, anyway, what you call it but, anyway, or … else … appoint your offspring … take your place … the … what was I talking about to start with?

The Artic Range proposal

GW -- Yeah. Oh, yeah. Who would administer it and ... lot of people, including Collins, thought it should be … what …

BW -- Florence Collins?

GW -- No. No. George Collins.

BW -- Oh, George Collins.

GW -- … thought it should be under the Park Service, and the … we said 'no. the minute you do that … and here … were … we started … and have to have Camp Denali down in the Park, we said, the thing is, as soon as you make it the park then they're going to have big hotels, and then they'll have to have roads to it, and then they'll have to develop it, as they do national parks, ever since Yellowstone. And so … that would be the last person for have this type of thing. It's wilderness, it's not going to be wilderness if you … if the Park Servi… not that you're against national parks, or trying to abolish them, but having seen what happened in McKinley Park then that … it means, well, when you have a national park, you have a big hotel there, and then you have … you know, people might

get hurt and sue … you have to have bridges across the rivers and … and trail signs … and all of that. This should be wilderness. It shouldn't have any sign of man at … when you go there, you're on your own. And then we thought, well, maybe a Fish and Wild… a Bureau of Land Management … and it can't be a Forest Service thing – there's no trees up there. But … and then when we …what was the thing on … oh … when they finally established it … but they still hadn't decided who's going to run it … and it started out to be the Fish and Game, but, Stevens said …

BW -- You mean fish and Wildlife?

GW -- Fish and Wildlife, I mean, yeah, Fish and Wildlife that's … the … sorry … Stevens came in the act and said that … who … who … who should … who should manage it and … then when we got it without … they got … they established the Range without saying who would manage it. They still hadn't decided it. And Stevens who'd said, well, he just was going to hold up, not let anybody manage it … conservationists say 'oh, goody, goody. That's just what we want. That will keep it a wilderness longer.'

Well wilderness was ….

End of Tape 1 Side 2